

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 09 VILNIUS 000198

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

DEPT FOR G/TIP, G, INL, DRL, PRM, IWI, EUR/PGI, EUR/NB

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM KCRM KWMN ELAB SMIG ASEC KFRD PREF LH

SUBJECT: LITHUANIA 2006 ANNUAL TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (TIP) REPORT

REF: STATE 273089

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

1. (SBU) Summary: Lithuania is a source, transit, and destination country for trafficking in persons (TIP). The government of Lithuania (GOL) estimates that between 1,000 and 1,200 women leave Lithuania every year to engage in prostitution, basing their calculations on 2003 Europol data. There are no reliable estimates of the number of third country victims of trafficking who transit Lithuania nor of TIP victims within Lithuania's borders. Traffickers target young women from rural and economically disadvantaged areas with promises of employment abroad.

2. (SBU) The Government of Lithuania has increased the attention and resources it devotes to TIP. During the reporting period, the GOL approved its second multi-faceted anti-TIP strategy covering 2005-2008, strengthened its anti-trafficking legislation, increased funding to Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and created a specialized police department to combat TIP. According to the Ministry of Interior, 18 criminal human trafficking cases reached Lithuanian courts in 2005. The courts concluded eight cases by the close of the year, handing down convictions in six, and finding twenty individuals culpable. Ten cases are still in the pre-trial phase. End Summary.

I. Overview

3. (SBU) Lithuania is a country of origin and destination for Lithuanian victims of human trafficking. There are no current statistics available measuring the extent of trafficking from or through the country. Europol estimates (2003) that over 1,200 Lithuanian women are trafficking victims every year. This tracks reasonably with GOL conclusions that many of the 1,000-1,500 women leaving Lithuania every year to engage in prostitution are actually victims of TIP. Pointing to the increasing number of requests for assistance by TIP victims, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working on trafficking issues in Lithuania argue that the number is likely higher. Others, including the government explain the increasing number of victims seeking assistance as a result of effective anti-TIP outreach and increased public awareness. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Vilnius, before Lithuania's accession to the EU, Germany was the primary destination for Lithuanian TIP victims, followed by the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands. Since EU accession, an increasing percentage of Lithuanian TIP victims go to the UK. Ministry of Interior reports that there were 25 official, registered trafficking victims in 2005; all were women, one a teenager.

4. (SBU) Lithuania serves as a destination and transit point for victims of international trafficking of non-Lithuanian women. Women from Belarus, Russia (Kaliningrad region), and Ukraine constitute approximately 15 percent of the prostitutes in Lithuania. These women work as street prostitute or call girls or in illegal brothels. Other women continue on to third countries. There is no data available about third-country victims transiting Lithuania.

Victims

5. (SBU) Poor or economically disadvantaged women tend to be the primary targets of traffickers. These women are usually from rural areas and have few economic opportunities. Compiling data from over 200 TIP victims, the IOM office in Vilnius documented that most Lithuanian victims came from unstable families largely dependent on social assistance. More than half of the victims had not completed secondary education, and many were unemployed. The study showed that 72 percent of the women were single, and more than half had children. Twenty-four percent of the women questioned admitted that they knew they would work as prostitutes. Various organizations around the country assisted in collecting data from for this survey.

Traffickers

6. (SBU) Traffickers frequently approach women through advertising in newspapers and magazines. These seemingly legitimate advertisements often promise employment abroad in restaurants, bars,

nightclubs, and hotels or invite women to work as nannies, nurses, or models. Other advertisements seek women to provide intimate services, such as massage and escort services. Traffickers often try to ensure the victim's compliance through psychological intimidation and by withholding of the victim's travel documents, rather than resorting to physical violence.

Modi Operandi

17. (SBU) Both individuals and organized groups, some belonging to international trafficking rings, engage in TIP in Lithuania. Traffickers search for individuals seeking to work abroad as prostitutes and rarely risk taking women abroad by force. Very often traffickers are friends or even close relatives of the victims. According to NGOs working in this field, traffickers posing as prosperous businesswomen recruit victims from boarding schools with offers of lucrative jobs. Police note that there were no official reports of TIP victims from boarding schools, but the NGOs chalk this up to underreporting: Women often refuse to serve as witnesses or simply vanish abroad. Traffickers often provide women with false personal documents.

Trafficking Trends

18. (SBU) A 2005 IOM Vilnius study revealed that the number of people being trafficked from Lithuania to work in the sex trade increased since the country joined the EU in May 2004. There are no studies showing the rate continued to increase in 2005. The study revealed that the UK replaced Germany as the number one destination country for trafficked Lithuanians. According to IOM data, thirty-three percent of Lithuanian TIP victims go to the UK. The IOM data also indicates that internal trafficking accounts for 33 percent of all cases in the country. IOM Vilnius reported a marked increase in the number of TIP victims it assists. In the three years between 2001 and 2004, the IOM's Vilnius office assisted 41 TIP victims. In the 18 months between May 2004 and October 2005, the figure reached 54. The study documented an increase in the trafficking of minors. Before May 2004, 12 percent of victims seeking IOM help were minors; 16 percent in 2005.

Commitment to Combat Trafficking

19. (SBU) Serious political will to combat TIP exists at the highest levels of government in Lithuania. The GOL and Members of Parliament planned new anti-TIP efforts and held a series of press conferences on human trafficking in 2005. The GOL adopted its second national anti-TIP strategy, covering the period 2005-2008. The Government's program anticipates a budget of USD 1.97 million (LTL 5.7 million) of state, international, and other funds over the four-year period to combat TIP. In 2005, the GOL spent USD 141,379 (LTL 410,000) on anti-TIP programs, largely in support of NGO's. The GOL plans to allocate a total of USD 413,793 (LTL 1.2 million) of national funds in 2006 for anti-TIP activities, of which USD 155,172 (LTL 450,000) will support NGO's. In 2005, the GOL established a specialized anti-trafficking police unit. The new unit, in operation since January 1, 2006, employs five specialists to investigate TIP cases and to strengthen cooperation with foreign law enforcement agencies. The unit has a budget of USD 68,966 (LTL 200,000) for 2006. GOL officials believe that current resources for TIP are sufficient.

110. (SBU) The Ministry of Interior systematically monitors the implementation of the national TIP prevention program. In coordination with other institutions, the Ministry provides status reports to the GOL twice a year. The main sources of information on TIP are the Criminal Police, the Ministry of Interior, the IOM, NGOs, foreign embassies, the United Nations, and the media. These sources of information have proven reliable. Media attention regarding TIP significantly increased in 2005.

111. (SBU) The GOL acknowledges that prosecuting TIP-related cases is a continuing challenge. Many law enforcement officers and investigators lack experience investigating TIP cases and lack adequate professional contacts with foreign law enforcement officials and public prosecutors to help build cases against international traffickers. Prosecutors and investigators find it difficult to meet the standard of proof in cases where victims have been trafficked and sold into prostitution or to prosecute cases in which the criminal act occurs outside Lithuania.

112. (SBU) GOL officials note that it is often difficult to persuade victims to testify in TIP cases. Victims rarely volunteer to provide testimony against their traffickers due to fear and/or a lack of understanding of the crime. In their defense, suspected traffickers in international cases usually maintain that their relationship to alleged victims was to facilitate travel abroad for legal employment or to serve as traveling companion.

II. Prevention

GOL Organization and Efforts to Prevent TIP

113. (SBU) The GOL acknowledges that trafficking in persons is a problem in Lithuania. The GOL has a national anti-TIP strategy and a governmental working group to monitor implementation of the strategy. A mid-level official at the Ministry of Interior is the national point of contact for the anti-TIP program. The Ministry of Interior developed the strategy in consultations with the Ministries of Education, Justice, Interior, Social Security and Labor, Health, the Center for Crime Prevention, the National Police and NGOs. They exchange relevant information with the Border Protection Service, Customs Service, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Special Investigation Service, the State Security Department, and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense. The government's anti-trafficking program also involves the Ministry of Finance, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, and the Association of Local Governments. The Ministry of Interior works with the Ministry of Justice to improve legislation.

114. To disseminate the strategy nationwide, in 2005 the GOL suggested that municipalities allocate local resources for the anti-TIP programs and appoint a coordinator for TIP issues in each municipality. Many municipalities have followed these suggestions. Since 2000, the Border Protection Service has paid more attention to young persons, particularly females, traveling abroad.

115. (SBU) The government cooperated with NGO's and the IOM on TIP outreach and information programs they directed toward at-risk groups, potential trafficking victims, and clients of prostitutes. The GOL also cooperated with NGO's on women's empowerment projects (para 42). TIP prevention is not part of formal school curricula. Teachers who believe that TIP is a problem in their area may voluntarily incorporate into the standard curriculum prevention program developed in 2003. In 2005, 3,835 youths from risk groups attended 83 GOL and NGO-organized TIP prevention events (lectures, discussions at schools, film showings, etc.).

116. (SBU) The GOL approved the first National Anti-Corruption Program in 2002. In 2005, the GOL revised the program and developed an action plan for 2006-2008. The GOL's Special Investigation Service coordinates the program's implementation.

GOL's Relationship with NGOs

117. (SBU) The GOL has steadily increased funding to support NGO anti-TIP activities and worked closely with NGOs to implement major anti-TIP projects in 2005. In 2005, the GOL allocated USD 136,207 (LTL 395,000) to help fund 11 NGOs (LTL 270,000 in 2004; LTL 197,000 in 2003 and LTL 90,000 in 2002). NGOs spent the majority of this funding on victims' support, not for prevention. The GOL approved funding of USD 155,172 (LTL 450,000) to support NGOs in 2006. Despite the increases, the funding still falls short of the amounts NGOs requested. The GOL provides about 70 percent of the funding for NGOs, with international donors making up the shortfall.

118. (SBU) Local NGOs identify the following impediments to the GOL's efforts to address TIP problems:

- lack of serious attention to TIP cases on the part of law enforcement officials;
- low sentences for convicted traffickers;
- fragmented TIP prevention in schools; and
- underutilization of the GOL's witness protection program for TIP victims.

119. (SBU) The GOL also worked closely with the IOM Vilnius. In 2005, the IOM Vilnius released recommendations on TIP for law enforcement specialists and teachers. Between 2004 and 2005, the IOM Vilnius conducted 22 anti-TIP seminars for over 500 students, and distributed over 1200 copies of an educational video about TIP at Lithuanian schools.

III. Investigation and Prosecution of Traffickers

The Law Against TIP

120. (SBU) Lithuania's Criminal Code has included an article on TIP since 1998. The Code defines a trafficker as "an individual, who having a purpose to get material or other personal profit, having sold, or purchased or passed over or acquired in some other way a person" and prescribes a penalty of twelve years imprisonment for traffickers. Since 2003, the Criminal Code also includes eight articles related to TIP. The Code empowers authorities to prosecute individuals for establishing and operating a brothel, for public demonstration or promotion of pornographic items, and for possessing child pornography. There is no specific law against slavery, but other laws effectively cover this issue. Since 2001, the Criminal Process Code and the Criminal Code have provided protection for TIP victims willing to testify in trafficking cases.

121. (SBU) In 2005, the GOL proposed and parliament passed amendments to the Criminal Code that:

- 1) expanded the definition of human trafficking to conform with the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime signed in Palermo;
- 2) strengthened penalties for trafficking in persons (over 18 years old) from a minimum of no time in prison to a minimum of two years, and the maximum sentence from ten years to 12 years;
- 3) strengthened the maximum penalty for trafficking in children from 12 years to 15 years; and
- 4) assigned liability to legal entities in addition to private persons.

122. (SBU) The new Criminal Code prescribes the following penalties and fines for TIP-related activities:

- trafficking in persons -- up to twelve years imprisonment;
- profiting monetarily from prostitution or pimping -- up to USD 8,621 (LTL 25,000) and up to four years in prison;
- profiting monetarily from prostitution or pimping of a minor or engaging, organizing, and/or directing prostitution activities involving a minor -- two to eight years in prison. (Note: Minors in Lithuania fall under different legal categories. The law assigns different legal rights to minors who are younger than 14 years old than to those who are between 14-18 years old. End Note.)
- organizing or directing prostitution rings or transporting a person for the purpose of prostitution -- up to six years in prison;
- engaging in prostitution -- up to USD 4,310 (LTL 12,500) and incarceration for up to three years;
- forcing individuals into prostitution by means of coercion or fraud and engaging a minor in prostitution -- two to seven years in prison;
- trafficking in children (minors or juveniles) -- two to fifteen years imprisonment.

123. (SBU) The GOL applies punitive sentences to rapists similar to those given to traffickers. The penalty for rape is up to seven years imprisonment. Sentences for raping a juvenile (over 14 years old) can be from three to ten years, and rape of a minor (under 14 years of age) from five to 15 years. The penalty for forcible sexual assault carries a maximum jail sentence of six years; in the case of a juvenile -- from two to ten years; and in the case of a minor -- from three to 13 years. The law allows for the GOL to confiscate the property of convicted individuals. The punishment for exploitation of children for pornography is a fine and a maximum jail sentence of four years imprisonment.

Prostitution -----

124. (SBU) Prostitution is illegal in Lithuania. Prostitution is an administrative offense punishable by a fine of up to USD 172 (LTL 500) for a single offense and up to USD 345 (LTL 1,000) for repeated offenses. The Penal Code covers crimes related to prostitution (para 25). In 2005 the Parliament passed new legislation to penalize persons buying sexual services up to USD 138 (LTL 400). Previously, penalties were applied only to prostitutes. According to new legislation, after a second arrest for soliciting sex services, an individual shall pay a fine of up to USD 259 (LTL 750), or be placed in detention for 30 days.

125. (SBU) According to law enforcement officials, 260-300 women engaged in prostitution in Lithuania in 2005. NGOs believe this number is higher, with estimates ranging from 1,000-3,000. Between 12 and 14 criminal groups operated prostitution rings in Lithuania. In 2005, police fined 469 women (compared to 662 in 2004, 681 in 2003, 214 in 2002, and 272 in 2001) for engaging in prostitution. Though the law criminalizes pimping, the number of cases before Lithuanian courts in 2005 remained low. Police report that women from Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine constitute 12 percent of all women engaged in prostitution in Lithuania, down from estimates of 40 percent in 2001.

126. (SBU) According to the Ministry of Interior, the proceeds of prostitution in Lithuania exceeded USD 17,241,379 (LTL 50 million), while the proceeds of trafficking in human beings and related criminal acts amounted to approximately USD 68,965,517 (LTL 200 million). Men neither buy nor sell child brides in Lithuania; nor do they travel abroad to purchase child brides.

Investigations -----

127. (SBU) The GOL actively investigates cases of trafficking, and its agencies use special investigative techniques to the extent possible under domestic law. These techniques include undercover operations, electronic surveillance, and mitigated punishment or

immunity for cooperating suspects. Undercover operations account for over 80 percent of all investigations.

Prosecutions -----

128. (SBU) Authorities initiated 32 new criminal TIP investigations in 2005. Eighteen criminal cases involving 43 defendants reached court. Of these, six cases resulted in the convictions for 20 individuals. Two cases resulted in acquittals. Ten cases were still in the courts. The government officially identified 25 victims; all were women, one was a juvenile.

The courts sentenced the convicted traffickers, as follows:

Number of Individuals	Sentence
1	USD 517 (LTL 1,500)
1	USD 862 (LTL 2,500)
1	USD 2,586 (LTL 7,500)
1	18 months and USD 2,586 (LTL 7,500)
5	24 months
1	26 months
3	30 months
1	36 months
1	44 months
3	48 months
1	54 months
1	66 months

The courts suspended the sentences of seven individuals for various reasons, including lack of prior convictions, and granted amnesty to two persons.

129. (SBU) Police report that nearly half of traffickers in Lithuania have ties to organized crime groups, domestic or international. Individuals, small groups, friends, or family members constitute the balance of traffickers. In 2005, Lithuanian and British law enforcement agencies uncovered a criminal gang that transported nearly 100 women to the UK from Lithuania. In 2005, the police also detained at least five owners and employees of Lithuanian modeling agencies, allegedly fronts for trafficking women to Western Europe and the United Arab Emirates.

International Cooperation on TIP -----

130. (SBU) The newly created Trafficking in Human Beings Investigation Unit of the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau is responsible for international cooperation in TIP cases (para 10). In 2005, the GOL decided to institute a customs attache position in the Netherlands to improve communications with Europol, to ensure efficient information exchange, and to help prevent international crimes, including TIP. Currently, two police officers represent Lithuania in Europol.

131. (SBU) The GOL has bilateral cooperation agreements in the area of trafficking with the Interior Ministries of more than 20 countries. In 2005, GOL officials and members of Parliament organized a number of bilateral meetings with officials from the UK, Nordic, and Baltic countries to discuss cooperation in anti-TIP efforts.

132. (SBU) Lithuanian National Police organized a series of high-level meetings with their counterparts in Germany, England, Latvia, Belarus, and Estonia to discuss TIP-related collaboration. According to the Ministry of Interior, in 2005, Lithuanian law enforcement officials cooperated with the governments of the UK, Belgium, Holland, Austria, Germany, Latvia, and Norway in 172 international TIP investigations. The GOL provided information, assisted victims, and protected witnesses in these investigations.

Extradition -----

133. (SBU) Lithuanian law allows for the extradition from Lithuania of foreign nationals charged with TIP in other countries. The same extradition regulations apply to persons charged in TIP cases as in other criminal cases. Bilateral legal assistance agreements govern GOL requests for extradition. Lithuania has legal assistance agreements with Belarus, Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia, Uzbekistan, and a trilateral legal assistance agreement among the three Baltic States. The GOL joined the 1957 European Convention on Extradition in 1995. So far, only the agreement on extradition signed with the USA in 2001 meets the criteria of this Convention.

134. (SBU) There were two TIP-related extraditions in Lithuania in 2005. In January, a Vilnius court sanctioned the arrest of a Costa Rican citizen suspected by Costa Rican authorities of trafficking children in that country. Lithuania extradited the suspect to Costa Rica. In June 2005, a Vilnius court ordered the extradition to Germany of a Lithuanian citizen, suspected of trafficking Lithuanian and Ukrainian women.

Training -----

135. (SBU) The GOL's law enforcement training center provides new officers four hours of training in combating trafficking and preventing illegal migration. International organizations provide additional specialized anti-TIP training or officers attend courses abroad. In 2005, seven Lithuanian law enforcement officials participated in TIP-related training in Spain, Ireland, Hungary, and Belgium.

Government Involvement

136. (SBU) Media reported during 2005 that Parliament's ombudsman interfered in Norwegian court proceedings in which a Lithuanian national was charged with human trafficking. The Ombudsman allegedly offered the defendant legal services from a law firm with ties to his family business. There were no other reports of government officials' involvement in TIP cases.

International Instruments

137. (SBU) The GOL has signed and ratified all major international instruments:

-- ILO Convention 182, March 25, 2003.

-- ILO Convention 29 and 105 on Forced or Compulsory Labor, June 1994.

-- The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, April 2003.

-- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, June 10, 2004.

IV. Protection and Assistance to Victims

GOL Assistance

138. (SBU) Local municipalities, often with financial support from the national government, provide social, psychological, and legal assistance to TIP victims. The City of Vilnius and other municipalities operate hostels where mothers and children who are victims of domestic violence and trafficking receive shelter and social support. The Vilnius hostel provided shelter and comprehensive care for seven trafficking victims in 2005. The AIDS Center of Vilnius provides medical assistance and HIV/AIDS testing. The Foreigners Registration Center of the State Border Guard Service addresses questions of integration into Lithuanian society. The Police Department assists victims with legal and victim-protection issues and cooperates with NGOs working in this area. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs assisted 39 Lithuanian victims of human trafficking abroad in 2005.

139. (SBU) The GOL provided grants to 11 NGOs that supported 287 victims of trafficking. This support helped NGOs to assist 76 TIP victims to acquire secondary or vocational education, and 63 to gain employment. Although there is no official information on the exact number of TIP victims receiving assistance in Lithuania, experts estimate that over 300 victims received support in 2005.

140. (SBU) There is no official screening and referral process in place to transfer victims to NGOs that provide short- or long-term care. The police, however, closely cooperate with organizations that provide care to TIP victims, and, when appropriate, transfer victims to them.

Trafficked Victims' Rights and Protection

141. (SBU) The GOL adopted amendments to the criminal law in 2005 to prevent TIP victims from being penalized for acts related to prostitution or illegal immigration into Lithuania. The Parliament is expected to pass this legislation in 2006. Passage of these amendments will allow the government to grant temporary residency to foreigners trafficked to Lithuania who agree to act as witnesses against their traffickers and/or pimps. This temporary residency will cover the period required for foreign trafficking victims to participate in the court proceedings. To date, police have been allowing foreign trafficking victims who agree to cooperate with the police to stay in Lithuania. This legislation will legalize this practice. Police have not detained, jailed, deported or fined TIP victims who cooperated in trafficking investigations. TIP victims have also not been prosecuted for violations of other laws.

142. (SBU) GOL agencies and NGOs encourage victims to assist in trafficking investigations and prosecutions. However, many victims of trafficking are still reluctant to initiate cases; the Police initiated over 50 percent of all TIP pre-trial investigations. Victims may also file civil suits or seek legal action against traffickers. Victims, however, often fear seeking help from local

authorities, believing they will face deportation or arrest if they come forward. If a victim is a material witness in a court case against a former employer, the victim may obtain other employment or leave the country. There is no state-run victim restitution program, but victims may apply to the court for financial compensation from the individual who trafficked them.

143. (SBU) The Police's Witnesses and Victims Protection Service provides protection to victims and witnesses. The program has limited funding. TIP victims and witnesses comprised 10% of individuals receiving protection services in 2005.

Training GOL Officials to Assist TIP Victims

144. (SBU) Although the GOL does provide some specialized training on victim assistance to law enforcement officials, most training comes from foreign donors through IOM and other organizations (para 35). The GOL routinely provides its embassies and consulates in countries that are destinations or transit points for TIP instruction on handling trafficking cases and on assisting Lithuanian citizens who are victims of trafficking. These embassies and consulates maintain relationships with local governments and with Lithuanian and host-country NGOs that serve trafficked victims.

145. (SBU) Repatriated nationals who are victims of trafficking receive the same assistance from the GOL and NGOs as domestic TIP victims.

NGOs Assisting TIP Victims

146. (SBU) Twenty-five NGOs provide consultations or temporary shelter and rehabilitation assistance for victims of violence and TIP. The following NGOs are the most prominent in the field:

-- The Missing Persons Families Support Center is the leading NGO working in the anti-TIP area. It provided shelter and social assistance to 29 victims of trafficking in 2005. The Center educated over 200 young girls with the so-called Girl Group Method under the Girl Power project financed by the Aland Islands Peace Institute based in Finland. The Center joined the EU project EQUAL, which aims to create a support mechanism for victims of TIP to enter or re-enter the labor market. As a part of this project, the Center performed a survey of society's opinion about victims of TIP. The results showed that three percent of citizens know a victim of trafficking; only 43 percent of Lithuanians believe that people who have been trafficked and sold into forced labor in Lithuania are victims of TIP; 23 percent of employers would be willing to employ victims of trafficking, while 50 percent would not. The Center also distributed thousands of anti-TIP brochures and posters to young people throughout Lithuania, and implemented five TIP prevention programs in 2005. The Center has operated a toll-free hot line for victims since 2001. The GOL has provided funding to the Center since 2001, which constitutes about 70 percent of the Center's annual budget. Foreign organizations provide the balance of the funding.

-- Caritas is a Catholic charity that has provided assistance to TIP victims in Lithuania since 2001. Caritas receives most of its funding from German Catholic organizations. In 2005, Caritas received financial support from the GOL and assisted over 120 victims of TIP.

-- The Women's House Crisis Centers operates in 16 regions in Lithuania. The Center provides counseling to at-risk girls, and to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and TIP. The Center established a toll-free telephone number for victims in four regions. Over one hundred women received assistance in 2005.

-- The Social Ailments Consultation Site Demetra, which obtains most of its funding from the government's AIDS Center, provides anonymous, free medical assistance and psychological consultations to prostitutes and drug addicts in Vilnius. In 2005, Demetra assisted 64 TIP victims. Demetra's programs also promote safe sex, testing for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, and the development, publication, and dissemination of informational and educational material.

147. (SBU) Many of these organizations cooperate with each other and work with the GOL and the local IOM bureau. IOM assisted 35 TIP victims in 2005 through its own programs.

TIP HERO

148. Post nominates Mrs. Kristina Misiniene as a TIP hero. Ms. Misiniene, founder and coordinator of the program Aid to the Victims of Trafficking and Prostitution at Caritas, has coordinated assistance to over 300 TIP victims since 2001. Ms. Misiniene recognized years ago the necessity for additional TIP education, prevention, and support for victims, and has worked tirelessly to spread the anti-TIP message in Lithuania. In 2001, Ms. Misiniene convinced Caritas to start the Aid to the Victims of Trafficking and Prostitution program and secured financial support from abroad. Ms. Misiniene has been at the forefront of largely successful lobbying

efforts to convince the government to take more forceful actions to combat TIP. She has collaborated with other NGOs, and rallied over 30 volunteers to widen the services provided to TIP victims. She continues to expand education and outreach programs in rural areas of Lithuania. Ms. Misiniene gives countless hours of her time to provide exceptional psychological help and material assistance to TIP victims. She works with every single victim personally. Ms. Misiniene, an untiring advocate for TIP education, prevention, and support efforts in Lithuania, is undoubtedly a TIP hero.

Best Practices

149. (SBU) Anti-TIP prevention in Lithuanian schools is fragmented and is not a part of formal curricula. To combat this gap in anti-TIP efforts, the Missing Person Families Support Center designed an educational program for schools to ensure that students have adequate information on the risks of TIP. Under this program, the Center's employees visit schools and give one-hour lessons about TIP. The first part of the lesson is a showing of the film "The Devil's Ring" in which young victims of trafficking tell their tragic stories. A discussion with students about TIP and its dangers follows the film. At the end of the lesson, the Center's employees distribute anti-TIP brochures to students. According to Center personnel, almost half of all students admit that they had never heard of TIP before. The Center annually provides 15-20 such lessons in schools.

1V. Comment: Assessment

150. (SBU) The GOL fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of TIP and in many areas provides well more than the minimum. Through the reporting period, the GOL continued to demonstrate the political will to address the TIP problem. It increased funding for anti-TIP initiatives, established a specialized anti-trafficking police unit, and improved Lithuania's legislative framework. To further strengthen anti-trafficking efforts, the GOL should expand prevention programs nationwide, include TIP prevention in formal school curricula, and should establish a formal victim-screening program and referral mechanism. While enforcement statistics improved during the reporting period, the GOL should also impose higher sentences on traffickers.

VI. Post Contact Information

151. (SBU) Embassy points of contact for TIP are Alex Titolo, Political/Economic Officer (through April 1, 2005), and Traver Gudie, Political/Economic Officer, (after April 1, 2005), and Giedra Gureviciute, Political/Economic Specialist. Tel (370-5)266-5500, fax: (370-5)266-5510. Email:gureviciute@state.gov, titoloa@state.gov.

152. (SBU) Post spent 140 hours in the preparation of this TIP report cable. POL/ECON OMS spent 8 hours proofing this report. POL/ECON FSO spent 20 hours on information gathering and editing. POL/ECON Chief spent 10 hours editing. AMB and DCM spent a total of 2 hours editing and approving. POL/ECON FSN spent 100 hours on information gathering and drafting.

MULL